

A L B E R T,
EDWARD AND LAURA,
AND
THE HERMIT OF PRIESTLAND;
THREE LEGENDARY TALES.

By R. ROBERTS. *Miss*
K

“ Thus when the transient dream of life is fled,
“ May some sad friend recal the former years;
“ Then stretch’d in silence o’er my dusty bed,
“ Pour the warm gush of sympathetic tears.”

OGILVIE,

L O N D O N :

Printed for T. CADELL, in the Strand.
M D C C L X X X I I I .

[Price 3s.]

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AND

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"Then when the transient dream of life is fled,
"May some sad friend recall the former years;
"Then flick'ring in flames o'er my dusky bed,
"Breathe the warm gush of sympathetic tears."
OCHLEY.

LONDON

Printed for T. Cadell, in the Strand.

1827

[Price 3s.]

TO THE HONOURABLE
Lady MARY FITZMAURICE.

MADAM,

THE Tales, which I do myself the honour to present to your Ladyship, may serve to amuse an hour, by that serious, though not unpleasing sensation, which the mind is inclined to feel from a contemplation of the manners of antiquity, so far removed from modern life. In those early days, Love, together with false notions of Religion, as well as Honour, carried their professors to an ardour of enthusiasm which, though it may please in description, is what we should rather wish to avoid than imitate; yet in so doing we are apt to err on the opposite side, and the fine passions of humanity are ridiculed in a manner that confounds the ideas we should have of them; and even the sacred name of Religion is too often disgraced by the opprobrious one of Superstition.

There are indeed a distinguished few, who, without discarding the finer feelings of the soul, have admitted the embellishments of modern fashion.—Amongst those happy few, give me leave to mention Lady MARY FITZMAURICE. The concurring voice of the world agree, that refined tenderness, and the polite

ease of modern accomplishments, are joined in her; and that the familiar easy manners of Mr. FITZMAURICE, united with ancient hospitality, give to that charming romantic country in which they reside, even in these days when every peasant is free, an aspect of happy vassalage divested of the iron rod of oppression.

In behalf of the Tales, which I am permitted to address to your Ladyship, I have only to say, that I have endeavoured to interest the passions, without offending morality or delicacy; and in those which may more immediately be styled my own, being purely invention, I have wished to convey some moral, to display the evil consequence of giving way to jealousy and revenge, those turbulent passions, which prey upon and deform the heart of man; even Love, the most gentle of all, will, if not under the guidance of reason, produce unhappiness to those who are actuated by it.

How far I have succeeded, I am myself no judge; but if you, Madam, smile upon my poetic labours, I shall have no fears of criticism from the rest of the world.

I am, MADAM,

With the utmost respect,

Your Ladyship's obliged,

And obedient humble servant,

R. ROBERTS.



Wm. Roberts Del.

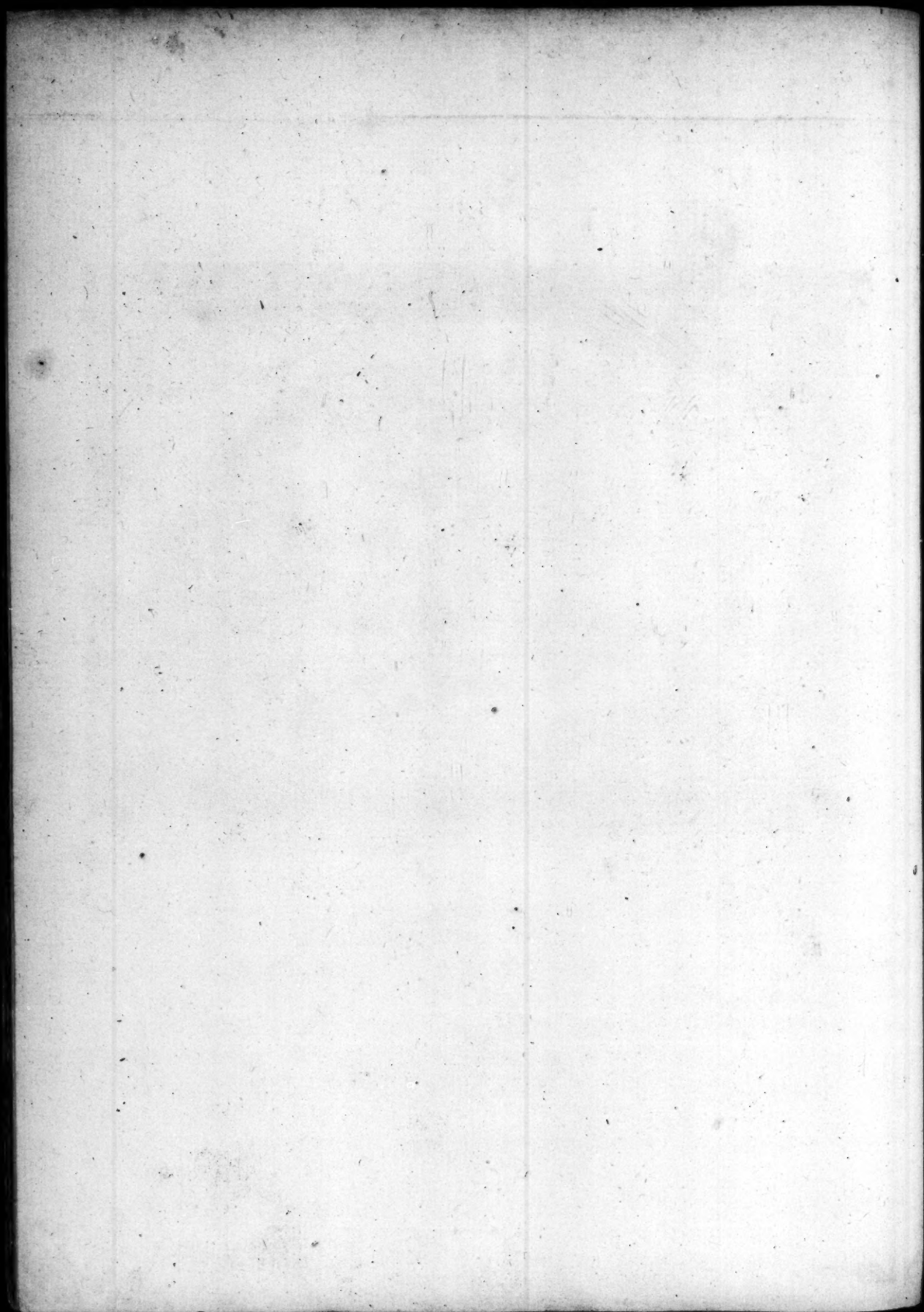
J. Green Sculp.

THE BOOK

A Legendary Tale

By R. Roberts;

Printed for J. Cadell.



A L B E R T,

A

LEGENDARY TALE.

B

A L B E R T

A

LEGENDARY TALE

THE following romantic Tale is supposed to have happened in the reign of Edward the Third, when the religious order of Knighthood, whence the subject of it is taken, was in its zenith. The scene of the conversation is laid in the grounds of a house belonging to the knights of St. John of Jerusalem, now in the possession of John Bacon Esq.—It is situated near East Barnet, in Middlesex, and still bears the name of The Friery. There are about it some remains of antiquity; and the parish church was once the chapel of the monastery. The appearance of the place, in an evening's walk by moon-light, first led the author to a train of thoughts, which made her design the Tale that now, with two others, makes its public entry into the world.

THE following romantic Tale is supposed to have happened in the reign of Edward the Third, when the religious order of Knights, whence the subject of it is taken, was in its zenith. The scene of the conversation is laid in the grounds of a house belonging to the knights of St. John of Jerusalem, now in the possession of John Bacon Esq.—it is situated near East Ham, in Middlesex, and still bears the name of The Priory. There are about it some remains of antiquity; and the parish church was once the chapel of the monastery. The appearance of the place, in an evening's walk by moon-light, first led the author to a train of thoughts, which made her design the Tale that now, with two others, makes its public entry into the world.

A L B E R T.

" O she was all !

" My fame, my friendship, and my love of arms,

" All stoop'd to her ; my blood was her possession :

" Deep in the secret foldings of my heart,

" She liv'd with life, and far the dearer she."

YOUNG'S *Revenge*.

I.

HAIL to this venerable pile,
 Where erst those holy feet have trod,
 Who fled the world's deceitful smile,
 And sought in solitude their God.

C

Within

II.

Within those walls Jerus'lem's knights,
Grown grey beneath the helmet's plume,
Have found in pray'r unmix'd delights,
While sacred truths their souls illumine.

III.

That hallow'd ground, where blended dust
Of pious warriors mould'ring lies,
Holds the blest relicks of the just,
Whose spirits mounted to the skies.

IV.

That holy fane, whose ivied head,
Now bounds the pensive, pleasing scene,
Did fainted heroes softly tread,
Devote to God, by man unseen.

V.

And here in social hours of praise,
St. JOHN's ensignia plac'd on high,
Did they their choral voices raise,
And loud hosannas pierc'd the sky.

This

A LEGENDARY TALE. 11

VI.

This grove, whose bending boughs unite,
The pointed gothic arch to form,
Repres'd the sun's too pow'rful light,
Or shielded from the beating storm.

VII.

And here the rising face of day
Did oft their morning walk invite,
Their early sacrifice to pay,
And seek from Heav'n a purer light.

VIII.

Or when the setting day declin'd,
Oft would those friendly brothers walk;
And while they earthly cares resign'd,
Beguile the hour with pleasing talk.

IX.

There many a tale of woe relate,
That call'd them from the world's gay scene,
The various labyrinths of fate,
Which fix'd them in this spot serene.

Beneath

X.

Beneath that oak's embow'ring shade,
 Whose leaves exclude the solar ray,
 ALBERT his sad devotions paid,
 And sigh'd the live-long hours away.

XI.

Here oft the mossy bank he prest,
 And wet the turf with many a tear;
 While secret prayers, to Heav'n address'd,
 Call'd forth each pitying saint to hear.

XII.

The friendly brothers saw his grief,
 Though still the cause remain'd unknown,
 And vainly strove to give relief;
 For sorrow call'd this knight her own.

XIII.

But ELDRED, cast in pity's mold,
 Who long the Prior's seat had fill'd,
 Within whose heart the cloister's cold,
 Had not the social virtues chill'd.

For

XIV.

For ALBERT'S woes he inly bled,
And wish'd his confidence to gain ;
His heart, by pity's impulse led,
Panted to sooth the mourner's pain.

XV.

One evening, by the moon's pale light,
The sage this sacred vista trod,
Where, 'midst the darksome gloom of night,
His thoughts were all absorb'd in God.

XVI.

When through the solitary glade,
Where gleaming light so darkly shone,
To reach the thick embower'd shade,
ALBERT was gliding all alone ;

XVII.

His sighs the awful silence broke,
Which reign'd the solemn scene around ;
In broken plaints his grief he spoke,
Till broken plaints in tears were drown'd.

D

ELDRED,

XVIII.

ELDRED, in holy vision blest,
 Was wak'd by pity moving sound ;
 Humanity, his constant guest,
 Gave to his feeling heart a wound.

XIX.

He thus the mourning knight address'd ;
 " Oh ! ALBERT, sure 'twill not offend,
 " That, when I see thee thus oppress'd,
 " I share the sorrows of a friend.

XX.

" I no enquiring wishes feel,
 " My mind no curious fancy leads ;
 " My only wish those woes to heal,
 " With which my brother's bosom bleeds."

XXI.

To him, sad ALBERT thus replied,
 " I long have known my Prior's worth ;
 " To him each virtue is allied,
 " And human mis'ry calls them forth.

" But

XXII.

“ But nought, alas ! can me avail ;
 “ Oh list, my father and my friend,
 “ Whilst I relate the tragic tale
 “ Of evils, which can never end.

XXIII.

“ Once, in the sunshine of my days,
 “ The winged hours with pleasure flew,
 “ The op’ning morn did prospects raise,
 “ Of joys still springing to my view.

XXIV.

“ High birth and wealth conspir’d to bless,
 “ And love, sweet soft’ner of the whole,
 “ Did unrestrain’d my heart possess,
 “ And shed his influence through my soul.

XXV.

“ I lov’d, and wedded to the fair,
 “ For whom my heart incessant beat ;
 “ Each earthly bliss was center’d there,
 “ And happiness seem’d all complet.

XXVI.

- “ Oh Heav’n! how could deception dwell
“ Beneath that lovely, guileless form?
“ Oh guilt, thou genuine child of hell,
“ Why did’st thou not that face deform?

XXVII.

- “ All soft and innocent her looks,
“ Her thoughts seem’d written in her eyes;
“ I studied them as virtue’s books,
“ But those blue heavens were all disguise.

XXVIII.

- “ More my domestic joys to blend,
“ Friendship bestow’d its pleasing pow’r;
“ In early youth I gain’d a friend,
“ Whose converse charm’d each rising hour.

XXIX.

- “ Fortune to him was most unkind,
“ And humble his paternal cot;
“ What heart-felt joy then fill’d my mind,
“ To share with him my happier lot.

“ EGBERT

A LEGENDARY TALE. 17

XXX.

“ EGBERT was as a brother lov’d,
“ My artless soul on him reclin’d;
“ My JULIA too my friend approv’d,
“ And in the bond fraternal join’d.”

XXXI.

“ Unhappy league! A lawless flame
“ Was rais’d in EGBERT’S treach’rous breast;
“ Ah base return! detested name!
“ Which ’rest his hapless friend of rest.”

XXXII.

“ Ah me! my unsuspecting heart,
“ Glowing with love, and friendship’s fire,
“ Unconscious of the villain’s part,
“ Beat with no racking jealous ire.”

XXXIII.

“ Oft, with a seeming gen’rous pride,
“ He’d wail his hard, dependant fate;
“ Though every act I strove to hide,
“ Which serv’d that rigour to abate.”

E

“ At

XXXIV.

" At length, to ease my friend from pain;
 " His dignity of soul had rais'd,
 " And free his heart from that disdain,
 " My mind alternate blam'd and prais'd ;

XXXV.

" I try'd my interest with the king,
 " Whose conqu'ring bands I once did lead;
 " I flew to court on friendship's wing,
 " That sacred tie encreas'd my speed.

XXXVI.

" My royal master heard my suit,
 " And, as a prince, the meed bestow'd;
 " At my request transferr'd the fruit,
 " He thought he to my service ow'd.

XXXVII.

" What joy my glowing bosom felt !
 " When EDWARD'S ever lib'ral hand,
 " Gave to the friend, for whom I knelt,
 " A post of profit and command.

XXXVIII.

“ Eager the tidings to declare,
 “ I trusted not the courier’s haste ;
 “ Myself the welcome news would bear,
 “ And with my friend the pleasure taste.

XXXIX.

“ Just as the setting sun declin’d;
 “ I reach’d my once belov’d retreat ;
 “ And ent’ring through a wood behind,
 “ Which led to JULIA’s fav’rite seat ;

XL.

“ What language can expression find ?
 “ What words can paint the guilty scene ?
 “ From those dread struggles in my mind,
 “ Oh father ! guess the guilt I mean.

XLI.

“ The wife, who kept my treasur’d heart,
 “ The friend, my bosom held most dear ;
 “ Nature with horror seem’d to start,
 “ And cast around a wildness drear.

“ Rage

XLII.

" Rage and revenge my soul possess;
 " The Furies cry'd, Spare not such guilt:
 " In EGBERT's false, ungrateful breast,
 " I plung'd my dagger to the hilt.

XLIII.

" Then reeking from the gaping wound,
 " The blood-stain'd weapon forth I drew,
 " Whilst JULIA, kneeling on the ground,
 " Did for returning mercy sue.

XLIV.

" For thee what mercy can I feel?
 " I said, and turn'd my face aside;
 " When the revengeful, fatal steel,
 " In life's warm blood was doubly dy'd.

XLV.

" Oh father! from reproach refrain,
 " Though all deserv'd its arrows fly;
 " Pity the horrors I sustain;
 " To me 'twere happiness to die.

" Too

XLVI.

“ Too dark their crime to be forgiven,
“ Yet bold the wretch who vengeance deals ;
“ Vengeance belongs alone to Heaven,
“ Whose justice wounds, whose mercy heals.

XLVII.

“ Here I repentant sorrows pay,
“ To them whose blood I once did shed ;
“ In tears I waste the waning day,
“ And spend my vigils with the dead.

XLVIII.

“ Add to my tears thy pious pray'r,
“ For such in Heaven hath much avail,
“ That I at length that grace may share,
“ Whose sacred fountains never fail.”

XLIX.

ELDRED, with tears and heart-felt sighs,
Mov'd slowly through the deep'ning shade ;
“ Thou hast my pray'rs, my son, he cries ;
“ I can no more—be God thy aid.”

L.

ALBERT retir'd within his cell,
 Where on the ground he prostrate lay;
 His breast contending passions swell,
 He sigh'd the lonely night away.

XLVII.

Here I repentant sorrows pay,
 To them whose blood I once did shed;
 In tears I waste the waning day,
 And spend my vigils with the dead.

XLVIII.

Add to my tears thy pious pray'r,
 For such in I much avail;
 That I at length grace may obtain,
 Whole sacred fountains never fail.

XLIX.

Ere long, with tears and heart-felt sighs,
 Mov'd slowly through the dooming shades;
 Then halt my pray'r, my son, he cries;
 I can no more—be God thy aid.

EDWARD AND LAURA,

A

LEGENDARY TALE,

**TAKEN FROM A STORY SAID TO HAVE HAPPENED
IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.**

ALBERT A LEGENDARY TALE

EDWARD AND LAURA

LEGENDARY TALE

TAKEN FROM A STORY SAID TO HAVE HAPPENED
IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

A R G U M E N T.

THE time of the Crusades was an æra as favourable to the romantic passion of love as it was to the enthusiastic spirit of religion: the like ardent zeal animated the heroes souls in both those glorious causes; and if it sometimes carried them to excess, it was, however, an error on the side of virtue; it was a frantic heroism, the only species of madness which the moderns, particularly of this country, are not apt to fall into. A sordid love of self was a principle that never could find admittance into the breast of a real knight errant, in whom zeal for his Saviour was the first, and love of his mistress the second leading motive for every action of his life: in such circumstances, it may be supposed many incidents happened which served to form the novels, of which that age was so fond.

Among a number of stories which I have seen, that which gave rise to the following Poem affected me:

G

the

the most. The story is simply this. A nobleman of Normandy (a country in which the nobility formerly prided themselves on a long train of ancestors, illustrious by hardy deeds of valour) had an only daughter, who was courted by a young gentleman of worth and honour, but of a family which had no lineage to boast of. The nobleman, alarmed at it, expostulated with great bitterness with the young lady, and took the opportunity, while her lover was engaged in a crusade, to usurp a power over her inclinations which no parental authority could give him, and force her to marry the Count de Coucy. The news reached her lover, then at the siege of Buda, who in despair threw himself into the foremost rank, and soon received a mortal wound. Seeing himself at the point of death, he called his attendant, and desired that, as soon as he was dead, his heart might be taken from his body, baked hard in an oven, and then ground to powder, put into a gold box, and conveyed to his mistress with a letter.

The trusty servant was eager to execute his dying master's commands; but by an unfortunate accident the letter was intercepted, and fell into the hands of the Lord de Coucy, who, stung with jealousy, gave

the powder to his cook, with orders to mix it in a ragout, which he prevailed on his wife to eat, assuring her it was salutary for that languishing disorder which she had from the time of her marriage laboured under: but no sooner was his request complied with, than with a malignant pleasure he told her what he had done. The unhappy lady shrieked with horror, and with a flood of tears declared she would never more touch food; after which she went to bed, and never rose again.

I have deviated in a small degree from the story, just to make the lady suppose her lover dead before she yielded to marry another; and the ragout not being so proper to give to a lady in a consumption, I have changed into a cordial.

- “ Howe’er exalted or deprest,
- “ Be ever mine the feeling breast:
- “ Life fill’d with grief’s distressful train,
- “ Forever asks the tear humane.

LANGHORNE.

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“Howe'er exalted or depressed,
“Be ever mine the feeling breast;
“Life fill'd with grief's distressful train,
“Forever asks the tear humane.”

LANGHORNE.

EDWARD AND LAURA.

I.

IN ancient days a Norman Baron liv'd,
 Who, having pass'd his youthful years in war,
 Amidst his friends and vassals then receiv'd
 The honours dearly bought by many a scar.
 One child he had, a fair and virtuous maid,
 Who tend'rest care with filial love repaid.

II.

The beauteous Dame, to whom she ow'd her birth,
 Bestowing life, had yielded up her own;
 The day design'd for joy and festive mirth,
 Was fill'd with cries of woe and plaintive moan.
 The weeping Sire his darling often ey'd,
 "My LAURA lives in thee," as often cry'd.

H

The

III.

The lovely LAURA grew, by all admir'd,
 Her Father's joy, his hope, his favourite care;
 And many a gentle Knight, by love inspir'd,
 In tender accents breath'd the ardent prayer:
 But the fell Sisters her sad lot had cast,
 Her fatal doom irrevocably past.

IV.

A 'Squire, who fortune's smiles had never shar'd,
 But was with nature's gifts profusely blest,
 In some soft moment had his love declar'd,
 And found a tender pleader in her breast:
 To him with pleasure oft she lent an ear,
 And all his fondest vows would kindly hear.

V.

Their mutual love could not be long conceal'd,
 A father's prying eye the secret found;
 That read what LAURA's eyes too well reveal'd,
 And fame, too busy, spread the tale around:
 Struck with disdain, the haughty Baron cry'd,
 "My daughter ne'er shall be this Peasant's bride."

VI.

With eager haste he to his daughter flew,
And thus in gentle terms the maid address'd :
“ My LAURA's happiness, my constant view,
“ Benignant Heav'n has giv'n to my request ;
“ A noble Earl demands thee for a wife,
“ And crowns with joy thy father's ebb of life.”

VII.

No words can paint the hapless maid's surprize,
In vain she strove to speak, her voice was drown'd ;
Her speech was choak'd amidst her rising sighs ;
O'ercome with grief, she sunk upon the ground :
Again she try'd to speak, her tongue deny'd,
But tears and dumb complaints the want supply'd.

VIII.

The Baron saw this conflict in her mind,
But rage, not pity, glow'd within his breast ;
With words determin'd, and with looks unkind,
His fix'd resolves he harshly thus express'd :
“ That folly which thou dread'st, fond girl, to own,
“ To thy wrong'd father is already known.

“ But

IX.

“ But hear what I, thy offended Sire, declare,
“ And think what duty does of thee demand ;
“ A stranger to my blood shall be my heir,
“ Unless to this brave Earl thou giv’st thy hand :
“ My hoary head will soon sink down to rest,
“ A Parent’s curse to thee’s my last bequest.”

X.

This said, with frowning aspect he withdrew,
And left th’ unhappy Fair to grief a prey :
A grove of firs near *Fayel Castle* grew,
To which the lovely mourner bent her way ;
Here first did EDWARD breathe the tender tale,
And here o’er LAURA’s fears did Love prevail.

XI.

Here as she walk’d, remembrance of the past,
And sad foreboding of the future years,
O’er LAURA’s mind the gloom of ev’ning cast,
And all spontaneous fell a shower of tears :
Her heart, by love of virtue only fir’d,
Bewail’d the pride which lordly birth inspir’d.

While

XII.

While thus she wept, thro' the sequester'd shade,
 Where ev'ry eve he met his much-lov'd Fair,
 EDWARD approach'd the melancholy maid,
 With downcast eyes, and looks which spoke despair.
 The sorrow which o'ercharg'd his manly breast,
 At length found vent; he thus his grief express'd.

XIII.

" I ask not, LAURA, why the rising sigh
 " Does from thy gentle bosom thus ascend;
 " Nor why the tears thus trickle from your eye;
 " Too well I know the cause, my lovely friend.
 " Ah, LAURA! once I hop'd a softer name,
 " A tend'rer epithet, my love might claim.

XIV.

" Love, the great leveller of human pride,
 " Which makes the Monarch kneel before his slave,
 " Which all our boasted titles does deride,
 " That foe to wealth, that conqu'ror of the brave,
 " Made me forget my humble lot of life,
 " And dare to think of LAURA for a wife.

I

" But

XV.

" But *Fayal's* Lord has check'd my aspiring soul; *W*
 " And shewn the distance 'twixt your state and mine,
 " And though my constant love bears no controul, *E*
 " Yet will I ne'er disgrace his noble line: *twob d W*
 " Up honour's steep ascent I'll force my way, *of ed T*
 " And *LAURA's* charms will dangers overpay. *nel 1 A*

XVI.

" A faithful band of warriors now unite, *on s I "*
 " The Christian banner's to their view display'd; *d "*
 " Against th' insulting Saracens they fight, *lw r M "*
 " And call an injur'd SAVIOUR to their aid. *ew oo T "*
 " In such a cause my lowly blood shall rise, *I d A "*
 " And Fame's emblazon'd coat shall be my prize. *" "*

XVII.

" Then crown'd with honours shall your Knight return,
 " And lay his trophies at his Fair-one's feet; *d W "*
 " No more conceal'd his ardent flame shall burn, *" "*
 " But gentle *LAURA* shall his passion meet: *l ed T "*
 " Nay e'en your father will our faith approve, *M "*
 " And with his sanction bless our well try'd love." *" "*

But "

I

While

XVIII.

While thus he spoke, alternately hope and fear
 With warring conflicts fill'd his LAURA's breast;
 To hope of rising fame she gave an ear,
 Then dread of dreary death her soul possess'd;
 Till yielding to necessity's strong tide,
 To EDWARD's reasons thus the maid reply'd.

XIX.

" Alas! brave Sir, from whence this pride of birth;
 " On which our Nobles lay such mighty stress?
 " Does Nature fill their molds with finer earth?
 " Or Wisdom with superior talents bless?
 " Your brighter worth declares the tale untrue,
 " And Nature justifies her work in you.

XX.

" But if the Christian's faith your bosom warms,
 " Those sacred truths with zeal your soul inspire,
 " May its great LEADER smile upon your arms,
 " And on th' insulting foe pour all his ire;
 " May Heaven's protecting pow'r my EDWARD shield,
 " And bring him safe with conquest from the field."

4 To

XXI.

To LAURA's pious wish the youth replies,

" I trust our Lord will lend a pitying ear,

" Such virtuous orisons ascend the skies,

" And Faith descending banishes all fear.

" Faith, hope, and love, shall animate my breast,

" And Hymen's sacred torch shall be my crest.

XXII.

" But should that land receive my breathless clay,

" Where once GOD's Temple rear'd its sacred head ;

" There once enclos'd a GOD incarnate lay,

" And thence a glorious band of Martyrs led.

" If I, like them, by blood my faith should prove,

" To distant worlds I'd bear my LAURA's love.

XXIII.

" Farewell then, dearest maid, if Heav'n ordains

" That you no more shall bless my longing eyes,

" This last embrace shall heal my future pains,

" And cheer my soul when vanquish'd Nature dies.

" To GOD's protecting power I leave my Fair,

" The charge of female worth his angels share."

XXIV.

With mingled tears, and looks of deep distress,
The unhappy pair sigh'd out their last adieus;
The lamp of hope sunk ev'ry moment less;
No ray of light shone forth to distant views.
She to the castle bent her pensive way,
He seeks the camp where Christian banners play.

XXV.

Now in the field the warlike soldiers, led
By hardy chiefs, the hallow'd Cross display,
Where *Mahomet* his impious laws had spread,
Thro' troops of Infidels they forc'd their way:
Where danger press'd, brave EDWARD still was near;
Love fill'd his soul, and left no room for fear.

XXVI.

Join'd with a small, but chosen youthful band,
Whose souls, like his, with ardent zeal were fir'd,
He drove embodied legions from that land,
Where holy lips by truth were first inspir'd.
Deeds such as these rais'd EDWARD's martial fame,
And Knighthood gave due honour to his name.

XXVII.

But bent on conquest, eager for the fight,
He once his enemies too far pursu'd;
They seem'd to seek their safety in their flight,
Till sudden succour their lost hopes renew'd.
Redoubled rage now fill'd th' exulting foe,
And EDWARD fell beneath th' avenging blow.

XXVIII.

The fatal news soon reach'd fair LAURA's ear,
That EDWARD fell, by numbers overpower'd;
No more the conflict now 'twixt hope and fear,
But grief alone its baleful influence shower'd.
Despair became an inmate in her breast,
And her whole soul was sunk in gloomy rest.

XXIX.

Her father by each soothing fondness strove
To heal the anguish which possess'd her mind;
He wish'd success had crown'd their hapless love,
And oft with tears the lovely mourner join'd:
This lenient balm a parent's hand supply'd,
By slow degrees her streaming sorrows dry'd.

Parental

XXX.

Parental tenderness, with watchful eye,
Still mark'd the progress of declining grief;
Each day some varied scene it did supply,
And studied ev'ry art to give relief;
Till th' impassion'd heart had ceas'd to bleed,
And serious softness did the storm succeed.

XXXI.

The Baron still, his fav'rite wish in view,
Waited the moment when the look serene,
Which gently on fair LAURA's aspect grew,
And beam'd enchanting graces thro' her mien,
Reviv'd ambitious hopes within his breast,
That grandeur should his future lineage bless.

XXXII.

DE COUCY, yet a lover of the Fair,
Renew'd his vows in warm but humble strain;
His ardent suit, back'd by a Father's pray'r,
Did in her tender mind an influence gain.
Tho' dead to love, she yielded to his will,
Whose wishes duty taught her to fulfil.

XXXIII.

A blooming, yet a melancholy bride,
 With mild reluctance she bestow'd her hand;
 And ev'ry effort o'er her heart she try'd,
 To make it yield to wedlock's stern command.
 By gentle smiles she strove her woes to heal,
 Nor suffer'd sighs her anguish to reveal.

XXXIV.

While EDWARD bleeding on the hostile plain,
 Where gallant Knights in death promiscuous lay,
 Suppos'd like them to be amongst the slain,
 By hands of *Saracens* was borne away.
 Rescu'd from death, alas! to be a slave,
 From death, less dreaded by the truly brave.

XXXV.

Twice had the sun gone his successive round,
 Ere chance of battle set the captive free;
 The victor chiefs their long-lost comrade found,
 And more than life, they gave him liberty.
 Little, alas! did all these gifts avail!
 When from their lips he heard the fatal tale.

Oh

XXXVI.

" Oh LAURA, perjur'd Fair," the lover cry'd,
 " Never, ah! never can'st thou now be mine;
 " Would that at *Salem's* sacred walls I had dy'd;
 " Happy that hallow'd earth had been my shrine.
 " But still devoted to CHRIST's holy law,
 " 'Gainst thee, oh *Mahomet*, my sword I draw."

XXXVII.

For *Buda* now the gallant troops prepar'd,
 And hopeless EDWARD join'd the martial band;
 Where dangers press'd, the foremost still he dar'd,
 His courage scarcely subject to command.
 Death seem'd the object which he had in view,
 Through hosts of foes he did the shade pursue.

XXXVIII.

Nor vain his search; full soon a bow was bent,
 The deadly dart was lodg'd within his breast;
 His weeping soldiers bore him to his tent,
 By skilful hands his bleeding wound was dress'd;
 But the envenom'd point all art withstood,
 And rankling poison mingled with his blood.

XXXIX.

Immortal scenes now op'ning to his eyes,
 Could aught on earth employ one moment's care?
 Was there an object yet beneath the skies
 That could with Heav'n his warm affection share?
 In that dread hour did Love an entrance find,
 And LAURA'S image seated in his mind.

XL.

While ebbing life his trembling frame sustain'd,
 In moving terms he penn'd his last adieu;
 Of fate alone the unhappy youth complain'd,
 Nor one reproach against his Fair-one threw.
 But e'en in death his LAURA was confest,
 The last dear inmate of his beating breast.

XLI.

A servant, on whose long-try'd zealous care
 EDWARD with steady confidence rely'd,
 Watch'd by his couch in silent sad despair,
 And vainly strove the trickling tear to hide:
 The dying Hero gently press'd his hand,
 Saying, "Friend, observe thy master's last command:

XLII.

“ This wounded body soon shall sink in dust,
 “ My nobler part shall mount the starry road;
 “ Yet one deposit to thy hands I trust,
 “ This Heart, of LAURA once the blest abode.
 “ Let not the mansion where her image lay,
 “ Be food for worms, or turn to common clay.

XLIII.

“ When dead and cold, as quickly I shall be,
 “ Take from my lifeless corse that faithful pledge;
 “ Harden’d by fire, from all its softness free,
 “ To powder crush’d beneath the millstone’s wedge;
 “ Within this golden urn the powder lay,
 “ And the sad present to her hands convey.

XLIV.

“ This picture too, faint transcript of her charms,
 “ This shadow to her Lover did she give;
 “ Her real beauties bless a rival’s arms;
 “ With that reflection can I wish to live?
 “ Death’s gloomy terrors in that thought are laid,
 “ And as a soothing friend he brings me aid.

“ This

XLV.

" This lov'd companion of my captive years,
 " Within this farewell letter I enclose;
 " Wrote with my blood, wash'd pallid by my tears,
 " These to my heart's sole mistress I dispose.
 " Adieu! a mandate summons me on high,
 " To meet its Judge, my spirit mounts the sky."

XLVI.

Soon as his master's obsequies were past,
 With duteous haste, the faithful soldier went
 T' obey commands the saddest and the last,
 Yet such as to discharge his mind was bent.
 Now at the feat which bore DE Coucy's name,
 He begs admittance to the noble Dame.

XLVII.

The hapless Bride, to secret grief a prey,
 By slow-pac'd steps, was passing to the grave;
 The fine machine was falling to decay,
 And check'd the current of the crimson wave.
 Now in her bower, with weary thoughts oppress'd,
 O'erpower'd nature sinks awhile to rest.

Meanwhile

XLVIII.

While her Attendant to the stranger hies,
And begs he'd give the casket to her care ;
" Soon as my Lady opes, says she, her eyes,
" Your melancholy gift to her I'll bear."
Passing the hall to where her Lady lay,
Du Coucy chanc'd to cross the maiden's way.

XLIX.

Aw'd by a master's strict enquiring voice,
Which sternly ask'd her what she would conceal,
She yielded to necessity, not choice,
And the sad secret trembling did reveal.
Frowning, he said, " Let this in silence sleep,
" Why should my wife without cessation weep ?"

L.

Now cank'ring jealousy, revenge and hate,
Corroding passions, stung Du Coucy's breast,
With envious rage he view'd his rival's fate,
And e'en in death he deem'd the Hero blest.
" My wife for me no softness feels," he cries,
" Regret, not love, is painted in her eyes.

M

" But

LI.

" But let me give her Minion to her wish,
 " Entomb'd within her breast his heart shall lie;
 " I will myself present the costly dish:
 " For such a burial, who would grudge to die?"
 Then hiding fell revenge, with tend'rest air
 He sought the couch where sat the languid Fair.

LII.

His rage conceal'd with guise of fondest love,
 " My LAURA, my soul's joy," he softly sigh'd,
 " The leech's skill does not the cause remove,
 " Which fades the beauties of my much-lov'd bride,
 " But see! a powder from *Arabia* brought,
 " At a high price, for thee thy Lord has bought.

LIII.

" This precious balm, of long-try'd sov'reign use,
 " In this rich cordial here I then infuse;
 " Drink it, my Love, soon mix'd with life's warm juice,
 " Renewing health will through thy veins diffuse.
 " Such health as will those blooming charms restore,
 " Which taught Du Coucy's bosom to adore."

With

LIV.

With soft complacence, but without reply,
LAURA receiv'd the cordial from his hand ;
With his desires attentive to comply,
His wish to her was ever a command.
Thus from the cup her Lover's heart she drain'd,
With the rich juice her lovely lips were stain'd.

LV.

Malignant joy now fill'd DU COUCY's breast,
With vengeful malice gleaming from his eyes ;
“ My LAURA's now,” he cried, “ most surely blest,
“ Since Heav'n has yielded EDWARD to her sighs ;
“ That precious balm which does enrich thy veins,
“ Once form'd the heart which caus'd thy guilty pains.”

LVI.

The hapless Lady struck with horror stood ;
Then sinking on the couch, she shriek'd aloud ;
When from her eyes burst forth the gushing flood,
And keenest anguish did her aspect cloud.
“ It's well, my Lord,” she cry'd, “ the balm you've giv'n,
“ Will bear my guiltless shade to yon bright Heav'n.

LVII.

“ Justly you said it would my health renew ;
 “ No other food shall ever nourish life ;
 “ Receive my pardon, and my last adieu,
 “ No longer shall I live Du Coucy’s wife.
 “ Soon will the grave that awful tie dissolve,
 “ My free-born soul from mortal vows absolve.”

LVIII.

A few short hours determin’d LAURA’S fate,
 Her breath in gentle slumbers died away ;
 Her Lord repented of his rage too late,
 And useless tears did to her manes pay :
 Within the cloister, where her dust was laid,
 A daily requiem for her soul was pray’d.

LIX.

May never faithful Love like theirs be crost,
 May pride of birth be banish’d from mankind ;
 Be all distinctions, but of merit, lost,
 And honour seated only in the mind :
 For there, and there alone, should be the seat.
 The virtuous only, are the truly great.

THE
HERMIT
OF
PRIESTLAND,
A LEGENDARY TALE.

N

THE HERMIT

THE

HERMIT

PRISTINE AND

A LEGENDARY TALE

N

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Author, being on a visit at a Gentleman's house in Hampshire, very pleasantly situated near the sea, was requested by the family, of which she then made a part, to write a Legendary Tale; the occasion of which was, that in laying out the pleasure-grounds, the Gentleman found a beautiful sequestered spot, which tempted him to build a little romantic Cell, in which he placed a fine venerable figure of a Hermit; when that was done, he did his guest the honour of begging the assistance of her Muse. The story is a little sally of the inventive powers, and was at first meant only to oblige her friends; but many reasons have influenced her to publish it.—The Hermit is supposed to be indulging that melancholy pleasure which the Unhappy sometimes find in recounting their woes to the inanimate objects which surround them.

The Title of the Hermit is taken from the name of the estate.

ALFRED TISSEMENT

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THE HERMIT OF PRIESTLAND.

" Her bloom was like the springing flower

" Which sips the silver dew ;

" The rose was budded in her cheek,

" And op'ning to the view :

" But grief had, like the canker worm,

" Consum'd her early prime ;

" The rose grew pale, and left her cheek,

" She died before her time."

MALLET.

I.

YE sea-beat shores, which oft my plaints resound,
 Whose echoes answer to your Hermit's lay;
 Ye scenes, which all my earthly prospects bound,
 Thou turf, to which I leave my breathless clay ;

O

While

II.

While yet ANTONIO breathes this vital air,
 While Heav'n suspends the last of my desires,
 This cell, the witness of my sad despair,
 Shall hear the lines which hapless love inspires.

III.

Year after year, I weep those errors past,
 Which robb'd the world of EMMA, gentle maid!
 Those charms, destroy'd by my unhallow'd blast,
 To Death's dark chambers were too soon convey'd.

IV.

In EMMA's lovely features were express'd,
 All that the painter's fancy e'er portray'd;
 With Nature's purest bloom her cheeks were dress'd,
 And to her form the Graces lent their aid.

V.

The heavenly blue which beam'd in EMMA's eyes,
 Confirm'd the softness which adorn'd her voice;
 Her artless soul, a stranger to disguise,
 But own'd the virtues Heav'n had made her choice.

I saw,

VI.

I saw, I lov'd, I heard, and I admir'd
Her graceful modesty, her sense refin'd;
An ardent flame my youthful bosom fir'd,
And love possess'd what reason had resign'd.

VII.

To my pure vows, my EMMA lent an ear,
A mutual passion fill'd her tender breast;
In softest accents, mix'd with virgin fear,
She own'd her love, she made her lover blest.

VIII.

Early misfortune drew my infant tears,
For soon, alas! by Heaven's severe decree,
I lost my father; who with anxious fears
To a kind brother's care entrusted me.

IX.

He, master of my fortunes and my will,
Look'd on me ever with a parent's eye;
Eager I should the highest stations fill,
His wish was but to see me great, and die.

X.

But EMMA's humble lot so low was cast,
 An honest yeoman gave the virgin birth;
 His years, tho' few, in useful labour past,
 His mortal part was mingled with the earth.

XI.

One son he left, in camps the youth was bred,
 He fought for glory 'gainst his country's foes;
 Misguided youth, by mad suspicion led,
 He plung'd ANTONIO's soul in hopeless woes.

XII.

Soon as my uncle had the secret found,
 That EMMA's charms had won his nephew's heart;
 With anger fir'd, he cry'd, "This shameful wound,
 " In my indulgence ne'er shall gain a part.

XIII.

" If thou, fond boy, to thy true interest blind,
 " Can'st thus descend a peasant's girl to love;
 " If lost to honour, thy ignoble mind,
 " To such a passion must a victim prove:

" Alliance

XIV.

"Alliance with thee henceforth I disclaim,
 "No blood of mine could ever fall so low;
 "No longer dare to boast my brother's name,
 "Unless thy honour does thy lineage shew."

XV.

Aw'd by the voice of one so much rever'd,
 To whom with filial love I'd ever bow'd;
 Whose anger next to Heav'n's I'd always fear'd,
 I hid my flame, my passion disavow'd.

XVI.

In private interviews I woo'd the maid,
 By honour guided, woo'd her for my bride;
 No selfish love that honour e'er betray'd,
 To injure her who on my faith rely'd.

XVII.

My EMMA listen'd to her lover's prayer,
 The priest in holy wedlock join'd our hands;
 Oh short-liv'd joys! oh lov'd, lamented Fair!
 How soon did death dissolve those sacred ties!

XVIII.

Our rig'rous fate no confidante allow'd,
Except her mother, witness to our love;
The matron's mind with prudence was endow'd,
But fondness blest'd what she could not approve.

XIX.

Our meetings all by stealth, our joys unknown,
By future hopes our happy hours beguil'd;
I liv'd for her, she liv'd for me alone;
What could I wish while EMMA on me smil'd!

XX.

But slanderous tongues their baleful malice shed,
At EMMA's fame they shot their poison'd dart;
Through all the country the report was spread,
That beauteous EMMA play'd the wanton's part.

XXI.

Those cruel tidings reach'd her brother's ears,
With rage and pride inflam'd the soldier's breast;
He lost his sister's virtues in his fears,
And fell revenge his furious soul possess'd.

He

XXII.

He left the camp all in the dead of night,
 And to his mother's village bent his way;
 No friend entrusted with his frantic flight,
 To calm his passions, or his vengeance stay.

XXIII.

Once with my EMMA I had fondly stay'd,
 Till Sol's bright beams shot forth his eastern ray;
 A sudden tremor shook the lovely maid,
 When morn approaching summon'd me away.

XXIV.

Ill-fated morn! decreed, alas! no more
 To meet my EMMA with the smiles of joy;
 No time can e'er the blissful hours restore,
 Which one short moment did, alas! destroy.

XXV.

As from the cot with pensive step I went,
 An unknown youth with fury cross'd my way;
 With wrathful ire, his eyes on me were bent,
 "Thou villain, stop thy course!" I heard him say.

XXVI.

Then from the sheath he drew the glitt'ring blade;
 "Defend thyself, unworthy wretch!" he cry'd;
 Then aim'd a stroke which me in dust had laid,
 But that my weapon drove his point aside.

XXVII.

Redoubled rage now flashing from his eye,
 With eager fury full on me he prest:
 Seeing that either he or I must die,
 My fatal sword I lodg'd within his breast.

XXVIII.

The clashing noise had reach'd my EMMA's ear,
 And with her mother forth she wild did run:
 Ah me! what sounds did then ANTONIO hear—
 "Alas, my brother! ah, my wretched son!"

XXIX.

Stiffen'd with horror, all aghast I stood,
 My looks expressive of my deep despair;
 First on the youth, now weltring in his blood,
 Then fix'd on EMMA, my unhappy Fair.

A LEGENDARY TALE. 63

XXX.

She from her brother's bleeding corse was torn,
And to her mother's cottage safe convey'd;
Her tender mind by cruel conflicts torn,
A settled sorrow on her vitals prey'd.

XXXI.

By slow degrees it sapp'd the springs of life,
Pining consumption brought her to her grave;
No healing balm could preserve my wife,
Vain was the medicinal art to save.

XXXII.

Soon as my uncle heard the tale of woe,
In all my griefs he bore a friendly part;
For me the sympathising tear did flow,
For me oft heav'd the sigh that rends the heart.

XXXIII.

Urg'd by his love, while ebbing life remain'd,
With him I pass'd my melancholy hours;
But when his soul eternity had gain'd,
I fled from men to these sequester'd bowers.

Q

Those

62 THE HERMIT OF PRIESTLAND.

XXXIV.

Those large domains, to which my birth held claim,
Which sure for nobler purposes were giv'n,
Than to transmit from age to age a name,
From Heav'n receiv'd, I dedicate to Heav'n.

XXXV.

Not to a convent did I give my store,
Where lazy Monks no active virtue know;
But those whose suffering merit I deplore,
On them with ready hand I still bestow.

XXXVI.

Great Power! accept my alms, accept my tears,
Mercy benign, wash ev'ry guilt away;
When Time's no more, and Nature sinks in years,
Receive thy Hermit to eternal day.

WRITTEN ON A FATAL EVENT,
which happened in BRADSHAW STREET.

THE AUTHOR of the foregoing POEMS,
having been much importuned by her Friends to give
the following melancholy Stanzas to the Public, has
been prevailed on to add them to this little Collec-
tion, thinking they will not be unacceptable to her
Readers.



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tion, thinking they will not be unacceptable to her

Readers.

WRITTEN on the FATAL EVENT,
which happened in LEADENHALL STREET,
January 18, 1782.

I.

WHEN God's tremendous thunders roll,
And rend the earth from pole to pole,
And bodies rise to join the soul;

II.

Then will this beauteous infant train,
Whose spotless minds ne'er knew a stain,
Attend their SAVIOUR's peaceful reign.

III.

Angelick smiling, hand in hand,
They meet the blessed Beth'lem band,
Who bled by HEROD's stern command.

IV.

First Fruits of Heav'n they stand confest,
No actual guile they e'er possess,
 And Sov'reign Mercy does the rest.

V.

The hoary sinner doom'd to file,
 Viewing those saints with envious eyes,
 As rob'd in light they mount the skies,

VI.

Shall wail with tears his hapless fate,
 Which gave his years a length'n'd date,
 When now repentance comes too late.

VII.

He sees the throne with trembling dread,
 Wishing to hide his guilty head,
 For ever in the grave's dark bed.

VIII.

Meanwhile the blissful blooming throng,
 With pleasing rev'rence march along,
 Preceded by the Seraph's song.

IX.

They sing, "The heav'nly seats prepare;
 " Behold ! your Lord's peculiar care
 " Are come, his promis'd love to share."

X.

Celestial harps repeat the sound,
 The golden roofs of Heav'n rebound,
 And worlds in chorus echo round.

XI.

May these reflections still be near,
 The sad parental breast to chear,
 And stop the frequent gushing tear.

XII.

Perhaps e'en now, all dazzling fair,
 Those gentle spirits waft through air,
 And shield their parents from despair.

XIII.

May be, their future task's assign'd,
 To watch a brother's opening mind,
 Or guard from ill the tender kind.

From

XIV.

From 'midst the guardian Saints elect,
Indulgent Heaven may them select,
Some unborn sister to direct.

XV.

Let weeping friends indulge the thought,
With more than human comfort fraught,
And bend before his awful Throne,
Who calls those Innocents his own.

XI.

May these reflections still be near,
The sad parental breast to cheer,
And stop the frequent gushing tear.

XII.

Perhaps e'en now, all dazling fair,
Those gentle spirits wait through air,
And shield their parents from despair.

XIII.

May, by their future state's assign'd,
To watch a parent's sleeping mind,
Or guard from ill the tender kind.